



UU-First

The Newsletter of the Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

66 Elm Street – P.O. Box 637, Gardner, Massachusetts

(978) 632-0222

www.uusg.net

September 2013

Minister:

Rev. John Pastor

Office Hours

Thursday 1-6pm.

Call church phone for an appointment or to arrange another day or time.

For pastoral emergencies call 508-277-6113.

Emeritus Minister:

Rev. Neil Bakker

Newsletter Editor:

Julie Pera

uusg.newsletter@gmail.com

Church Office:

Catherine Azora-Minda

978-632-0222

info@uusg.net

Sunday Services

10:00 am

Children's Religious Education & Nursery Care during worship service

Upcoming Worship Services

September 8 — Stirring the Waters — Rev. John Pastor

Welcome back! We begin our new church year by sharing water from our summer journeys. Make sure to bring some water to add to our common bowl. This service will be inter-generational.

September 15 — Riddle and a Mystery — Music & Worship Committee, with invited speaker Chuck Heidorn

Catherine Azora-Minda, Vicki Heidorn, Marion Lyon, Julie Pera and Bill Ruggiero from the Music & Worship committee, inspired by a song heard at the Clara Barton & Mass Bay District Assembly, present a worship service touching upon the principles and sources of our religious community. Invited speaker Chuck Heidorn will speak on his experience of mystery.

September 22 — David and Goliath — Rev. John Pastor

Okay, there is a big obstacle in front of us. Now what?

September 29 — Goals, Objectives and Results — Roy Gilbert

My journey so far has taught me that we learn from our mistakes and gain from understanding. "A creative man is motivated by the desire to achieve, not by the desire to beat others." (Ayn Rand) C.S. Lewis once stated that you are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream. My life has always had dreams, planning, and accomplishments.

October 6 — Comfort Measures Only — Rev. John Pastor

What brings us true spiritual comfort to sustain us in times of struggles and pain.

Everyone is invited to join us for coffee and conversation in the fellowship hall downstairs following worship.



Rev. John will bless the animals at the Gardner Animal Shelter on Saturday, October 5th at 10am.

We are about to begin a new church year with our Water Communion on Sunday, September 8th. This is traditionally our time to ingather after a summer break to share our water and stories from our special summer places.

I recently received an email titled, "The Truth About Water." It came from a website offering tips for healthy living. I clicked on the highlighted link and ended up on a page that read, "Learn how to separate the myths from the facts about drinking water." Reading on, I learned things I knew and didn't know: How much water we should drink every day. Drinking water flushes toxins from our bodies. Bottled water does not cause tooth decay. Drinking water does not help keep our skin moist. Certain people can drink too much water. Of course the really good thing about water is that, in its' purest form, it contains no calories or fat.

Water, is essential to living things. Yet the origin of water seems to be a secret; the source is always out of our view. This mystery about water gives it a special place of sacred reverence which is why, for

countless years, water has been used in rituals of blessing.

When we return on Water Communion Sunday the water that each of us brings will be combined in our common bowl. Then it will be blessed and made holy by words, but most importantly made holy by your presence, dear ones. Let us not forget that we bless each other and the world by our presence.

Spiritual author John O'Donohue writes that water blessed by community is changed, "It is a live sanctuary from which the divine light and protection proceed."

So come bring your sacred water to be changed.

I am so looking forward to making other blessings together this year.

With love,



Coffee Hour and Kitchen Renovation

This is a reminder that the kitchen renovation is underway. This means that there are some changes to Coffee Hour. We still have the refrigerator available to store cold items in but we do not have an area for food preparation. If you bring something to share for coffee hour, please prepare it ahead of time and plan to bring home dirty dishes. Also, we are serving food using disposable plates as large platters and other kitchen items are not easily accessible. As always, we want to thank you for your time and effort. Your bringing and sharing food is greatly appreciated by all who attend coffee hour. Thank you.

Gardner Sidewalk Days

The Gardner Days event was a large success with a good number of volunteers from our church community. Thanks to all who offered to help, including Brien, Bill, Bo, Catherine, Jean, Rev. John, Lois, Marion, Nina, Roy, Terry, and Tom.

Volunteers supported set-up, offering water to passersby, transportation for volunteers, and sent/received well-wishes from the hospital. Lois danced in the streets to music from the sixties. A total of \$65 dollars in donations towards our kitchen project was received.

Event coordinators Lois and Roy reported that at the end of Saturday, they were tired but very happy. Thanks again to all who took the time to assist!



Dear Friends,

Welcome back from the summer break. It is time for another church year to begin. How time flies. First of all I would like to welcome Frieda Reichsman, Roy Gilbert and Brien Hawkesworth to the board. We are happy to have them join our board. Unfortunately, we have to say goodbye to Melody Fortier, Bob Gifford and Tom Brady. Thanks to all of you for your years of service, with special thanks to Bob for several years of dedicated service as our board chair

We are in the midst of renovating our kitchen. This is a big undertaking and we are very grateful to Tom for his diligent work with the architect, the building inspector and other assorted people. Thanks also to Roy for his work on the demolition. This is a large project and it is still under construction as the new church year starts. We are looking forward to a shiny new kitchen for the upcoming year.

The kitchen floor was rotting out and needed to be replaced and updated because of changing rules for safety. One of our goals is to be able to serve a free/low cost dinner for those in need in the Gardner community. Our kitchen project comes with a pretty hefty price tag. So far we have raised \$5,000 for the kitchen renovation and this is about a third of what we need. A committee is being formed to raise donations for the kitchen renovation. Meanwhile, if you would like to make a donation to help cover the cost of this project, it can be earmarked for the Kitchen Renovation Project, placed in the collection plate during Sunday service or mailed to the church in care of the Treasurer. For more information, please contact me.

In addition to the kitchen project, the board is taking on other projects as well. This year we continue to actively pursue becoming a Welcoming Congregation. The Welcoming Congregation

Committee will be hosting discussions to talk about issues concerning what it means to be a welcoming congregation and how we can strengthen and grow our church.

The Religious Education Committee continues to come up with new ways to teach our children about Unitarian Universalism and assist them in becoming active members of our community. You may notice some slight changes in our order of service to accommodate RE being able to do their job more effectively and allowing the children to participate more in the service.

Lastly, the Executive Committee and our minister will start off the new church year by attending a "Gathering of the Boards" at the First Church in Leominster. This will give our board members a chance to meet board members from other churches as well as an opportunity to brainstorm about what is important for our church in the upcoming year. This opportunity was helpful, enlightening and inspiring in the past and we are hoping to come away with similar results this year. We will be pleased to bring back what we discover to the church at large.

So, again, welcome back and, as always, you are encouraged to join us at the Executive Committee meetings. They are held on the third Monday of every month at 6:30 PM. If you have business to discuss with the board please email Bo at bazoraminda@comcast.net to be placed on the agenda. If are just interested in what happens at the board meetings, please feel free to come by. Our next meeting is on September 16th.

With metta,

Bo Azora-Minda
Executive Committee Chair



Over the summer, Nina Vecchi and Lisa Nuttall provided several opportunities for people to participate in kirtan at the church. Nina and Lisa offer the following description of kirtan: Kirtan is a form of devotional chanting of ancient Sanskrit mantras that goes back over 500 years in India. It is a form of Bhakti Yoga (yoga of devotion) and has the power to open the heart, calm the mind and lift the spirit. The singing is accompanied by musical instruments and rhythmic drumming and the community is encouraged to participate by chanting, clapping and dancing. You will not be able to resist the urge to join in! In its heartfelt expression kirtan can induce profound states of meditation, bliss and ecstasy.

We appreciate the generosity of the event attendees, whose donations benefited the kitchen renovation project.

Thank UU

To Barbara Bartl and Laura Reichsman for organizing our Pancake Breakfast before the Annual Meeting.

To Mike Vecchi and Roy Gilbert for putting up our Pride Sunday banner.

*Thank UU, Congratulations,
In Our Thoughts & Welcome*

If you know of a contribution, concern or accomplishment that deserves mention in this column, please be sure to send a note to the newsletter editor.

14th Annual HOPE Benefit

Pasta Feast

and
Annual Award Program

Thursday, September 19, 2013 • 4:30–7:00 P.M.
Program begins at 6:00 P.M.

PACC, 171 Kendall Pond West • Gardner

Eat-in or Take-Out

\$10.00 Adults • **\$5.00** children under 12
\$75.00 for a table of 8

Tickets available at HOPE, 20 Barthel Ave., Gardner or at the Door

All proceeds from this event will go directly to support
HOPE's work with underserved women and youth

Raffle Items donated by
local individuals and merchants

978.630.4752

www.hopegardner.org

Pasta with Home-made Sauce
Meatballs • Salad • Garlic Bread

Dessert & Beverages

provided by

Royal's Catering of Kamalohana Calico & Crème

HOPE LEARN • BELIEVE • SUCCEED

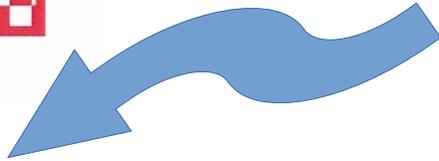
HOUSE of PEACE & EDUCATION, INC.



Adaptive Leadership

with Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh,
Director of Congregational
Development

Rev. John Gibb Millspaugh is a 2001 graduate of Harvard's Kennedy School (HKS), where Dr. Ron Heifetz has refined the theory of Adaptive Leadership for decades. After serving as Dr. Heifetz's teaching assistant in the 2009 HKS course "Leadership on the Line," Dr. Heifetz personally authorized John to teach his adaptive leadership framework. John has offered five General Assembly workshops to congregational leaders, one of which was rated the second-most appreciated workshop from over a hundred at General Assembly. He also has offered four-day workshops on Adaptive Leadership to clergy in California, Massachusetts, and North Carolina. A UU minister at one John's adaptive leadership workshops stated, "This was useful and an eye opener for me even after 19 years of ministerial leadership!"



A Learning Congregation Workshop

Saturday, October 5, 2013 from 8:30 AM to 12:30 PM
UU Wellesley, MA

It has been said: "There are no dysfunctional organizations; every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve what it gets." That goes for congregations, too. For leaders to make progress on our congregations' toughest challenges, we need new ways of thinking and feeling, new lenses to seeing what's right in front of us, and new tools for changing and being changed.

A rich resource for leaders who want to tackle significant, ongoing challenges in their congregations is the "Adaptive Leadership" framework, pioneered by Dr. Ronald Heifetz, Senior lecturer at Harvard's Kennedy School, and founder of Harvard's Center for Public Leadership. We'll start by quickly reviewing some basics of Adaptive Leadership-including the difference between adaptive challenges and technical problems, how and why congregations fail to make progress on their most important challenges, and how to create supportive spaces for the intense emotional and spiritual work of change.

We'll then take things to a "202 level" by examining six types of adaptive challenges common to our congregations, tools for understanding the personal aspects of adaptive work, and strategies for helping our congregations face any challenge more adaptively. Teams of congregational leaders encouraged but not required.

Fee: \$50 individuals
/ \$35 seminarians
- includes refreshments & materials.

REGISTER NOW!
(deadline 9/30 or capacity)



Daily Compass »
Inspiration for your spiritual expedition

A daily UU meditation and spiritual inspiration email.

Now offering an *audio* version with an *audio* response

The smallest connection with a wild creature feels like a blessing: a butterfly that lands on our sleeve . . .

Have you seen the You Tube video of the baby laughing uncontrollably as her dog snaps at bubbles?
What never fails to lift your spirits?

Sunflowers are at their most beautiful as they turn their great gold heads toward the sun. But after their petals have withered and their leaves dropped away is when they provide food for the birds, and the basis for a new generation of sunflowers.

What in your life has borne fruit after your hopes for it had faded away?

www.dailycompass.org

Produced by the Church of the Larger Fellowship,
the Unitarian Universalist Congregation Without Walls
www.QuestforMeaning.org or
www.clfuu.org



Church of the Larger Fellowship

This is the beginning of our third year as members of the Church of the Larger Fellowship. "The mission of CLF is to provide a ministry to isolated religious liberals, promote the understanding and growth of Unitarian Universalism and institute programs to that end." One of their primary offerings is an online worship service which happens at 8:00 on Sunday evening and is rebroadcast at 9:00 am and 1:30 pm on Monday. The focus of this month's services is Community.

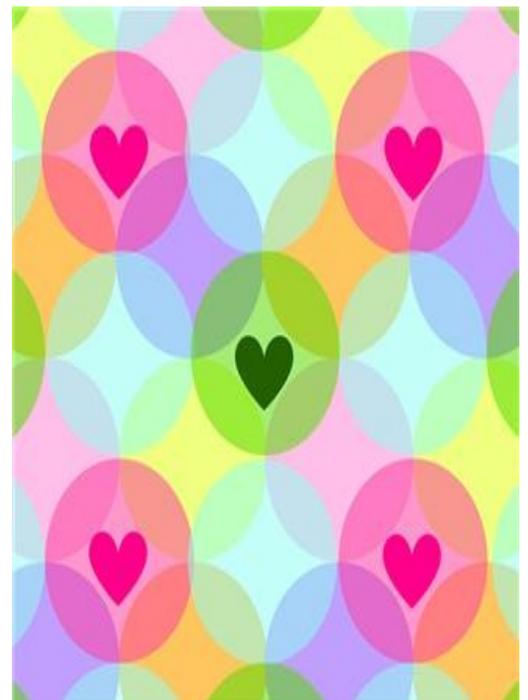
There are extensive resources available for preparing worship services, including fully prepared services and a large number of topic related sermons by many gifted ministers. There is also a lending library of UU related books (a list of the materials is available in the office). Contact Catherine Azora-Minda to get access to the list or to obtain the instructions for logging in to look at the worship resources. You can begin your exploration of all that is available to us by going to their website at www.questformeaning.org.

God is Love

Soon (if not already), we will have a new banner on our wayside pulpit. These banners that we change throughout the year, tell those passing by of events at our church or messages we feel are important. Last year, at a congregational forum, members were asked what words they wanted to see placed on the banner. Below is a Shaker Hymn that incorporates the words on our banner.

*I know that God is love, I feel it day by day,
It lifts me up and bears me on, Where love doth hold the sway,
Oh, the love, the love of God! 'Tis pure, 'tis sweet and warm,
Its power will melt the coldest heart, And calm the wildest storm.*

(Shaker Hymn, Mt. Lebanon, NY)



Unitarian Universalist Society of Gardner

P.O. Box 637

Gardner, MA 01440

Your Executive Committee

The Executive Committee usually meets on the third Monday of the month. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding church policies or programs, please feel free to speak with any of the church trustees.

Trustees for the Church Year 2013-14

(year in parentheses indicates term ending)

Bo Azora-Minda (Chair, '15)

Barbara Bartl ('15)

Roy Gilbert ('16)

Brien Hawkesworth ('14)

Chris Pera (Clerk/Treasurer, '15)

Frieda Reichsman ('16)

Laura Reichsman ('14)



Newsletter Contributions

UU-First is published nine times per year:

September, October, November, December-January, February, March, April, May-June, and July-August.

The deadline for the newsletter is the 15th of the month.